

THE
HAMMER

STUDENT ART & LITERATURE MAGAZINE SPRING 2021

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“All works, no matter what or by whom painted, are nothing but bagatelles and childish trifles... unless they are made and painted from life, and there can be nothing... better than to follow nature.”

THE HAMMER

Student Arts & Literature Magazine

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The Hammer is Central Piedmont Community College's student Arts & Literature magazine. Founded in 2017, The Hammer is based in Charlotte, North Carolina.

All visual, literary, and graphic arts herein were crafted, written, and designed by current students of Central Piedmont Community College.

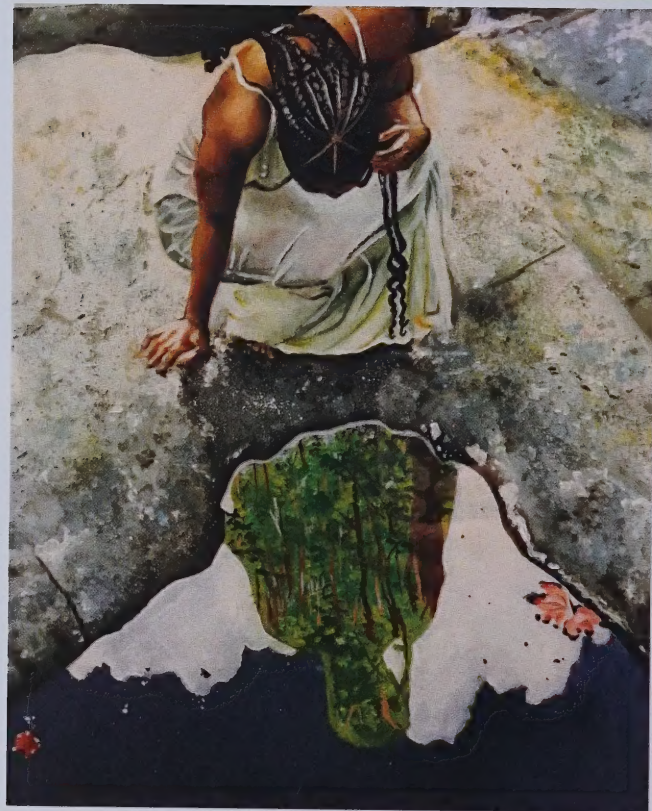
Visual art taken from the Annual Juried Student exhibit, which showcases top talent among our students at Central Piedmont Community College, highlighting the variety and skill in our Visual Arts program.

Questions or comments? Please send a message to the editor at colin.hickey@cpcc.edu

Special thanks to Edith McElroy, Linda Dunham, Megan Boisvert, Kenn Compton, and the Sensoria Literary Events Board.

Musing

Dru Swan
Oil on canvas
2021



Between Zero and One

Naomi Benson

I am the daughter of pasts unknown,
Leaving me lost and curious to the bone.

My great grandmother a traveler, a pioneer
Between them and me is another infinity to make clear.

My grandmother being a bird, flying freely.
Her soulmate, a fish, swimming so unruly.

My mother, a student, who always fell too short.
Yet, her determination is never distorted.

I know who they are, I know their stories,
All their lives' downfalls and glories.

Somehow the stories that they convey
Never completely or truly explain

Where they are from, what they had to change
Why are they who they are today, what makes us so strange

If there is an infinity of numbers between zero and one,
How am I supposed to understand all that has come?

Under the Cover of Night

Maya Osaka

I remember seeing her in that dress for the first time. The way the lace nestled amongst her collarbones, the way the organza fell as though it were a cloud around her silhouette, sweeping across her knees the way a cat rubs against a leg. She couldn't stop smiling at me, the widest grin I'd ever seen on her face, and her eyes... her eyes, in all their rich darkness, had their gaze fixed on me, unwavering. We had met under the cover of night in July of 1979. The air was thick enough to swallow, and

swallow it I did- great, heaping mouthfuls, the taste of magnolia and spoilt dirt coating my tongue and my throat as it tumbled into me. Or perhaps it was decay. But that was no matter. She was there, and I here, and we were together. She was clutching a single yellow rose. She always had loved them. Her dress was damp; perhaps She had been caught in the warm summer rain of that night. But She had never looked prettier to me, lying below me in the earth. We spoke; about

what. I do not remember. I just remember the sparkle of her laugh, soft and bashful and full of joy and longing and love. I reached down and grasped her head, cradling her face in my palms. I kissed her forehead, smooth and sticky, cool, and brushed the dirt and the worms and the damp from her. Her smile

just as wide as ever, and oh, her eyes. Her eyes! Didn't I tell you? Deep and cavernous and rich and dark. We went home that night in the summer of 1979, under the cover of the July night, leaving behind naught but a tombstone and a hollow grave. And She and I were together.

Bella

Addison Durfee
Oils, ink and coffee on
mixed media paper
2021



Morning Hawk

Charles Stone

I was walking Akasha the other morning. It was fairly cool out, and the dew sat prominently on the grass and weeds sparkling with the filtered sunlight beaming through the green clusters of leaves.

A lonely hawk let out a cry behind and to the right of me. I could see it perched atop this barren dying tree. Reminiscent of a nature film I thought. It has been months since I last saw it. Sometimes I think I hear it, so I look up at the tree. Even though I can't see it, I always feel something looking back.

The first time I remember seeing it was a few days after dad's memorial. My brother and I contemplated it, telling ourselves it was our dad reincarnated. I joked, "He'll never be able to rest in peace; he's still keeping an eye on the homestead."

He loved taking care of that house and making the yard look nice. The last thing he did before he died was cut his grass. I was taking Akasha back inside when I heard it cry out again. I guess he was letting me know the grass was too tall.

Out with Lanterns

Amy Spurling
Watercolor inks and
colored pencils
2021



Dissonant Whispers

Tyler Barnette

In my head
A plethora of voices roam
In my head they scream like whispers
And roar like waves

They're all consuming
My voice meshing with theirs
A hive mind
A crowd of consonant whispers
All threatening to assume control

You're one of a thousand voices
In my head, they all sound the same
If my words never pierce the veil
Will their meaning ever change?
I won't sink within the choir

I'm beating against the glass
My hands bloodied and bruised
Is it all for nothing?

If my words never pierce the veil
Will their meaning ever change?
I'll make amends, I'll make believe
I'll make my mind, I'll make you see
I'll take a chance, I'll take a moment
Let it out and let go

I won't sink within the choir
I'll stand up and scream it
I am dissonant!

First Time Painting

Brandon Wong
Oil on canvas
2021



Withering Away

Zoe Olson

No one knows I'm withering away but me
Everybody sees me doing fine
I'm the kind of person who knows who I am
Nothing in my life that I don't like

Shallow water still distorts the picture
I've always known exactly where I stand
The world is full of wonders past the shoreline
But I'll never drown if I'm on land

They say birds are happy when they're airborne
But they only sing when perched in trees
I've gathered all my twigs and threads already
If I could fly I wouldn't take that leap

So I'll wait and keep simply pretending
To be happy in the one place I'm not scared
I made my decision all those years ago
To do nothing for which I am not prepared

This fading soul of mine will leave no footprints
No map of all the places I've gone wrong
But now I see a tunnel, black and looming
The choice to go has been there all along

Maybe it is okay to be terrified
Or even not know anything at all
In the darkness, I'll misstep, I'm sure of it
But at least my world won't be so small

Color

Melea Womack
Acrylic and gesso board
2021



When Hope Dies

Tamara Timbers

Sometimes I feel like hope is fleeting
Hard to harness and has no meaning
It takes hold like a vice around my heart
It crushes my soul and gives way to woe
Wishing to be free or wishing to be whole
What you don't have you long for
Hope and despair, like a twisted little dance they prance between what it means to want,
to long for an end and a beginning.
To wait for a sign or the answer to your prayers.
That undeniable pull like the moon to the tides
They say hope breeds misery, but only when it dies

Psychedelic Thoughts

Keudis Sanchez
Acrylic on paper
2021



Summer Nights

Liliana Bragg

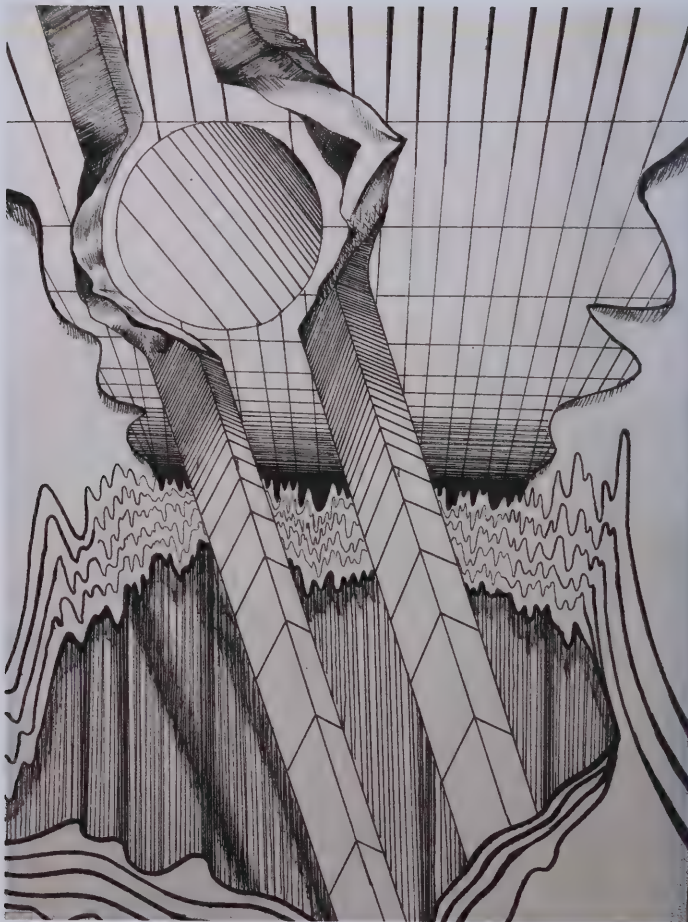
Love fills the air when the summer breeze flows.
Instant warmth is felt from the yellow sun,
like it is giving you a hug so tight you cannot breathe.
In the sky, there are no clouds to be seen. Only
a few birds that fly aimless and free.

Nature seems to peak during summer nights. When
all the birds have retired to their trees.
Gorgeous lightning bugs show off their light. Kids
racing with their mason jars eagerly to catch a few.
All the adults gather around the beautiful
campfire with their tasty drinks in their hands.
Every night is filled with extreme joy
because they are all filled with wonderful weather.

Right as September hits, the cold breeze starts to flow
again as the seasons start to change.
Green grass starts to turn brown, but it is a
great thing that summer comes 'round next year.

Inception

Ryan Haviland
Pen and ink
2021



Spilt Milk

Maya Osaka

Five broken fingers
A sink,
Full
bloodied linens, soft pink
sixteen ounces
of
laundry
detergent

the Boy with
milky eyes
Sitting on concrete steps

honey flows from
an open mouth
onto
Cracked Palms

a muddied,
messy prayer
to Abandoned gods
sprouting upwards into
a
cherry red sky
Hurried words
between
broken teeth

Tears melt skin,
the Nile river on a
Crooked face

There is no use
crying over spilt milk.

Tribes of the World

Ju-lan Shen
Clay
2021



The Mural of Us

Anushka Chalmeti

we found each other with shattered hearts
and gloomy canvases covered in
shades of black and white.
we made a vow that with all of our broken parts,
we would paint a mural of us — we wouldn't
stop until the dark turned into light.

and so we started small:
sandy plains, grassy fields, majestic canyons.
from farms to skyscrapers, italian
countryside to new york sprawl,
we painted together as comfortable companions.

even now, the mural is sanguinely unfinished:
abrupt strokes of an unblended sunrise
and hints of trees that are naked.

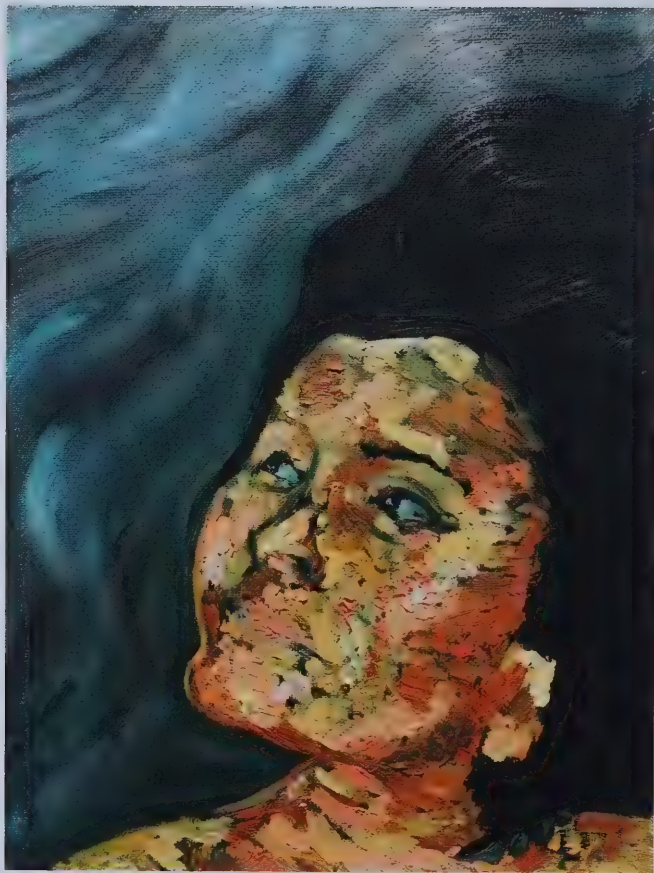
yet as the leaves change colors and
the sun's visits are diminished,
the pigment in my life starts to look faded.

when you find a mistake in the mural, you blame me:
so i take fuchsia from my tulip to offer you my color.
and while you use it to paint your crabapple tree,
i continue to grow smaller.
as my sky rains the last of its blue,
your leaves are reborn.
and as my daffodils lose their vibrant hue,
i'm torn:

am i to paint with you
or am i to be your palette?
as the grays in my life begin to accrue,
my part in the mural of us becomes pallid.

Endemic Endeavor

Dru Swan
Oils
2021



Adolescence and Ashe

E. Louise

I.

I was walking
Then I stopped, looked up, and waited
I waited, a long time
For a very long time

It started raining and I had to go inside
Where are you? Why won't you answer me and explain?

I.

I used to wish on the first star and
believe with all my heart
That thoughts went to a place where they became real
I believed in faith and pixie dust

WI told her to make a wish because if we
both wished, it would be stronger
I'd wonder what she wished for

I believed dandelions were magical and affected reality

I dreamed of a world where houses were candy,
the soil was chocolate, and there was a bowl
that made school lunch last forever

I remember when I thought if I did a thing,
God would let me stay young forever
And I could fly with pillows

I jump roped with blankets and went
mattress sliding down the stairs
I heard the tooth fairy at night and smelled
the glass Santa drank his milk from

III.

I tried
I walked with both hands in my pocket
I stumbled up the stairs
I closed my eyes and blew through my teeth

It was dark and expected
The news came with pressure,
with weight on my back
My skin was heavy, my mind was heavy,
my heart was heavy, my thoughts
were heavy, my breath was.....

still

They weighed me down, black and hurting

IV.

There she was all purple
And in the middle carried blue,
light blue like summer

She was my mother and my friend
and my aunt and my person
And I met her in the store, in the bread aisle

V.

Mark my words
by Spring, my face will be bright again
the Winter shadow won't be long by the corner
I'll be washed in sweet dew
And behold a new sun

gentle with a burgeoning warmth
I am awaiting

In the meantime, there's a certain relief
from what has pulled at my inwards
made my shoes like stones'

Weekly I arrive at the market
And I am free to pick and chose
And smell
And greet a smiling face

VI.
I don't know where you came from, and
I don't know where you're going
Or where I'm going
But I know that we've both met,
and we've both felt blessed
So let's keep blessing each other

God blesses the one who blesses
Bless you

VII.
I'm tired
He called for his mother

You're performing, but I live the life
I long for a place for me

See our humanity
We are strong but we are hurting

Roadkill

Lauren Miller

Through the rolling sea of blackened clouds
and underneath the cypress trees,
enshrouded by crows and melancholia,

-- and flies that buzz like
bumblebees towards flowers,
only death isn't as sweet as clover --

is the body.

Is it still my body if I am here and it is there?

My hooves stand still and firm
on the beams of sunlight
like they never did on Earth.

Even though the body is now a feast for worms
instead of a vessel for everything
green that kept me alive
until they didn't need to anymore,
its legs still look posed to dart
away at any moment.

I didn't think that my ears would
still perk up with fear
when I didn't have anything to
be afraid of anymore,
but I can see them standing
straight as a tree sprout
before it grew into its curves,
like a girl into a woman.

And although my neck is cracked
like broken china,
my blood cold and splattered
across the pavement,
and my antlers smashed into shards of bone
that hurt more than my broken heart did,

when the driver sped away
without making sure
that I was alright,

I'm alright now,
standing in the meadows of Heaven,
watching as cars drive past
the flesh and bones
that I left behind.

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